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ABSTRACT

A study examined the effect of communication style on use of different persuasive strategies. Subjects responded to a rhetorical sensitivity scale (RHETSEN) to determine their communication style: noble self, rhetorically sensitive, and rhetorical reflector. The persuasive style of the noble self can be characterized as straightforward and direct; the goal is to gain power in the situation and use that power to push for compliance. The rhetorically sensitive person is concerned about relationships with others and makes situationally adaptive choices. Rhetorical reflectors have been characterized as wanting to fulfill persuasive objectives through the satisfaction of the needs of the other person. Drawing on a set of 858 dialogues written by college students enrolled in speech communication classes, the project analyzed the dialogues written by the 161 subjects who identified exclusively with one of the three styles. The dialogue writers responded to one of six different persuasive situations defined by levels of intimacy and power. Results indicated that the strategies of guilt and allurement distinguished rhetorical sensitives from noble selves and that altruism and aversive stimulation distinguished rhetorical reflectors from noble selves and rhetorical sensitives. The results provide insight into how orientations toward communication influence the way in which persuasive situations are perceived and enacted. (Tables and figures are appended. Examples of dialogues and related discussions are included.) (SRT)

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RHETORICAL SENSITIVITY AND PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION BEHAVIOR

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RHETORICAL SENSITIVITY AND PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION BEHAVIOR

William F. Eadie and Robert G. Powell

This study investigated the role of rhetorical sensitivity in moderating the construction of persuasive communication situations. Dialogues written by rhetorical sensitives, noble selves, and rhetorical reflectors were coded for strategies. Discriminant analysis indicated that the strategies of guilt, allurement, altruism, and aversive stimulation separated the three orientations. Elementary linkage analysis indicated distinct differences in the pattern of correlations among the strategies for each orientation. Exemplar dialogues were analyzed and discussed.

RHETORICAL SENSITIVITY AND PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION BEHAVIOR

"It's not what you say, but how you say it," goes the old saw. Yet, communication researchers have concentrated more on what individuals say to produce desired effects and less on how what was said may have impacted the situation. In this study, we examine the concept of rhetorical sensitivity and how it lends itself to our understanding of differences in the ways people say the same things.

Rhetorical sensitivity began life as an alternative ideology to that of the dialogic movement of the 1960s and 1970s (Hart and Burks, 1972; Johanessen, 1971). Since the idea of rhetorical sensitivity was rooted in the familiar ground of traditional rhetoric (Ward, Bluman and Dauria, 1982) the concept became a popular one with many teachers of interpersonal communication. Nevertheless, the focus of rhetorical sensitivity theorizing and research shifted quickly from the content of the ideological position to the nature of individual differences between those who embraced such an ideology and those who did not. Hart, Eadie and Carlson (1975) began work on a scale that compared the rhetorical sensitivity ideology with the expressivist ideology. In the meantime, Darnell and Brockriede (1976) proposed two positions that contrasted with rhetorical sensitivity: persons holding the "noble self" position corresponded roughly what Hart and Burks (1972) had labeled the expressivists. Persons

embracing the "rhetorical reflector" ideology held to notions popularized by Dale Carnegie (1936) that slavish attention to the needs of others would provide the key to "winning friends and influencing people."

By the time Hart, Carlson and Eadie (1980) published the RHETSEN scale, these three positions were conceptualized as closely-held orientations toward communication, with rhetorical sensitivity representing something of a "middle ground" and noble self and rhetorical reflector representing extremes. This conception was reflected in the RHETSEN scales' style of measurement, with highest values being assigned to extreme positions when calculating noble self (NS) and rhetorical reflector (RR) scores and highest values being assigned to the middle position when calculating rhetorical sensitive (RS) scores.

Hart, Carlson and Eadie's (1980) data, from a national sample of more than 3000 college students, seemed to support this conceptualization. RS scores were correlated negatively with both NS and RR scores, while NS and RR scores were uncorrelated. Moreover, demographic analysis suggested that patterns of family and community interaction played a role in an individual's orientation. The stereotypic NS was an east-coast liberal, the stereotypic RR was a Southern Belle, and the stereotypic RS was suburban midwesterner. Even so, the conceptualization had its flaws: large numbers of the sample identified to a substantial degree with more than one of the orientations, and a group who identified with both NS and RR emerged. Called rhetorical

ambivalents, these individuals were more likely to be members of ethnic minorities than were individuals who held other orientations.

The RHETSEN scale proved difficult to use as a predictor of behavioral differences; numerous studies provided only hints that such differences existed (c.f., Carlson and Brilhart, 1980; Gilchrist, Browning and Bowers, 1980; Kelly, 1980; Ward, 1981; Bell and Lui, 1982; McCallister, 1982). The study with the most conclusive results was conducted by Eadie and Paulson (1984). Using ratings of style and competence made by student judges of persuasive dialogues written by other students, Eadie and Paulson (1984) found that NS dialogues were judged as being more distinctive in style than RS or RR dialogues, but that RS and RR dialogues exhibited some style differentiation as well. Eadie and Paulson (1984) also found that NS and RR dialogue writers were rated as being disparate in competence, depending on the nature of the situation, while RS dialogue writers were rated more evenly in their competence at handling the situations.

These results suggested that persons identifying with one of the RS, NS and RR orientations to the exclusion of the other two produced differing kinds of communication in persuasive situations. Using a category scheme devised by Danzinger (1976) Eadie and Powell (1984) could find no statistically significant differences for type of orientation. The differences observed by Eadie and Paulson's (1984) raters, therefore, may have been due more to how various strategies were used than to quantitative differences in the

kinds of strategies used.

This sort of reasoning fits well with the research on compliance gaining (for a summary see Cody and McLaughlin, 1985), which has found that persuasive situations are often defined by the kinds of strategies individuals perceive as being necessary for use in those situations. A more elegant version of this position is Greene's action-assembly theory (1984), which draws as its base notions from cognitive scripting (Abelson, 1976, 1981). In Greene's theory, actors draw on memory for strategies acceptable for use in a given situation, then modify them to fit constraints imposed by differences from previous situations. In this sort of an explanation, individual differences, such as orientations toward communication, can come into play during the modification process. Support for this idea can be gleaned from the results of studies by Douglas (1983; 1984), using self-monitoring, and from Boster and Stiff (1984), using dogmatism.

Despite the conceptual problems, then, previous research has indicated that studying communication by persons identifying strongly with RS, NS or RR orientations should focus on how these individuals differ in their styles of persuasive strategy use, as well as on clues that may indicate perceptual differences in how situations are defined in terms of those strategies. To this end, we posed the following research questions:

Q1: How do persons identifying with RS, NS and RR orientations differ in their use of persuasive strategies?

Q2: How do persons identifying with RS, NS and RR orientations differ in their perceptions of the relations among persuasive strategies?

METHOD

Dialogues. One hundred sixty-one dialogues written by individuals who identified exclusively with one of the RS, NS or RR orientations to communication were analyzed. These individuals were selected because their dialogues would provide the clearest contrast in persuasive strategy use. The dialogues were obtained from a set of 858 dialogues written by students enrolled in speech communication classes at [a western university], [a midwestern university], and [a southeastern university]. The dialogues were written by students during regular class sessions.

The dialogue writers responded to one of six different persuasive situations. The situations were defined by levels of intimacy and power, two factors shown by previous research as producing differences in persuasive communication (c.f., Millar, Rogers-Millar and Courtright, 1979; Ellis and McCallister, 1980; Williamson and Fitzpatrick, 1985; Witteman and Fitzpatrick, 1986). Three of the situations involved intimate relationships, and three involved nonintimate relationships. Power was distributed equally in two of the situations (symmetrical condition), the writer held power in two of the situations (one up condition), and the writer was out of power in two of the situations (one down condition). These situations had been

selected originally from a pool of such situations on the basis of ratings judging that the situations fit clearly into one of the intimacy/power categories and that there was no obviously "correct" way of handling the situation. The six situations are summarized below. In each situation, the writer of the dialogue is labeled "X," and the other person is labeled "Y:"

Intimate/symmetrical. X is about to have dinner when Y, a close friend, calls long distance. The friend wants to talk but is reluctant to disclose the nature of the conversation.

Intimate/one up. X, a parent, is trying to get Y, a teen-aged child, to run an errand. Y has initially refused, claiming a need to work on a project due at school.

Intimate/one down. X is a young adult who needs to have Y, a parent, co-sign in order to receive a car loan. Y has been reluctant to co-sign on initial approach.

Nonintimate/symmetrical. X works in a restaurant and would like to have Saturday night off so as to go on a date. Y has a Tuesday night shift, and the restaurant policy is that shifts may be traded as long as all the positions on a shift are covered.

Nonintimate/one up. Y, X's secretary, has initially refused a request to duplicate and mail out meeting notices for an organization to which X belongs, claiming that doing X's personal work is not part of Y's job.

Nonintimate/one down. X is eating at a restaurant and comes up five dollars short on a twenty dollar tab. In discussing the matter with Y, the restaurant's manager, X learns that the restaurant takes neither checks nor credit cards.

Just prior to writing the dialogues, the students responded to the RHETSEN scale (Hart, Carlson & Eadie, 1980). The scale consists of forty items to which persons respond on a five-point Likert-type scale. Certain items are then scored according to a key for each of rhetorical sensitive, noble self, and rhetorical reflector orientations. Extensive reliability and validity work

on the scale was reported by Hart, Carlson and Eadie (1980). Reliabilities for this sample were: RS = .71, NS = .70, RR = .69. Raw totals on the scale were adjusted for the confounding effects of scoring some of the items in as many as three different ways. The adjustment method used was the same as the one described in Eadie and Paulson (1984). The adjustments resulted in scores which were positive if an individual identified with one of the orientations and negative if the individual did not identify with that orientation.

Once the adjusted scores were calculated, we identified a pool of "pure types" by taking those whose adjusted scores were positive on one of the three orientations and negative on the other two. Since there were unequal numbers of pure types for the three orientations, we randomly selected fifty-five dialogues from each orientation group for analysis. As the analysis proceeded, four of the dialogues were discarded because of failure to follow directions or illegibility.

Coding. Two trained coders worked independently on the dialogues using the strategy system devised by Wiseman and Schenck-Hamlin (1981). This system was selected over other available strategy systems because it proved in trial coding sessions to be the best system for rating dialogue, in terms of providing the fewest number of noncodable responses. Wiseman and Schenck-Hamlin's (1981) system consists of thirteen categories. The categories are named ingratiation, promise, debt, esteem, allurement, aversive stimulation, threat, warning, altruism, direct request, explanation, hinting, and deceit.

After practice sessions on dialogues that were from the initial set but were not being used in the study, the two coders worked together to decide on units of analysis, then worked separately to place those units into categories. Using Cohen's kappa, reliability was assessed at .92, and disagreements were resolved before the data were submitted to statistical analysis.

Data preparation. From individual codes for each dialogue, we generated percentages of use of each of the thirteen strategy categories. Examination of the codebook for the strategies indicated that their distributions were skewed. Applying a square root transformation to the percentages reduced the skewedness considerably. Consequently, statistical analyses were conducted on the transformed scores for each strategy.

Analysis. To examine uniqueness of strategy use among the three orientations, we performed a multiple discriminant analysis using orientation type (RS, NS, RR) as the criterion variable and the thirteen strategies as the predictor variables. To see how strategies were associated for each of the three orientations, we applied McQuitty's elementary linkage analysis. To provide more detail to the explanations that could be inferred from the statistical analyses, we used their results to lead us to exemplar cases, and we examined those cases critically.

RESULTS

Discriminant Analysis

Following McLaughlin (1980) we tested for overall significance and homogeneity of variance through a direct method, where all variables are entered into the discriminant equation in the same step. We then selected a stepwise discriminant method, which bases its inclusion or exclusion of predictor variables on the criterion of maximizing Wilks' lambda. Seven of the thirteen strategies emerged as predictors. Both possible discriminant functions were significant beyond an alpha level of .05 (Function 1: canonical correlation = .35; Wilks' lambda = .81; chi- square = 33.26, d.f. = 14; p = .003. Function 2: canonical correlation = .29; Wilks' lambda = .92; chi-square = 13.36, d.f. = 6; p = .038).

Examination of the distances of each orientation from its function mean (Table 1) indicated that the first function separated RS from NS, while the second function separated RR from the other two.

Table 1 about here

Using a cut-off point of .40, we examined the correlations between the individual strategies and the two functions. We found two strategies to be correlated at sufficient levels with each function. For Function 1, the strategies were guilt (.49) and allurement (.46). For Function 2, the strategies were altruism (.69) and aversive stimulation (.49). Thus, rhetorical

sensitives were distinguished from noble selves by their use of guilt and allurement. Likewise, rhetorical reflectors were distinguished from both noble selves and rhetorical sensitives by their use of the strategies of altruism and aversive stimulation.

Dialogue Analysis

In order to understand the findings for each function more fully, we analyzed dialogues in which the strategies identified by the discriminant analysis were used for similarities within each of the three orientations and for differences between the orientations. In this section, we present exemplar dialogues and commentary.

Guilt and Allurement. The first discriminant finding was that RS and NS were distinguished from each other by use of the strategies of guilt and allurement. Examinations of the dialogues indicated that while both types tended to use guilt in the one-up situations, rhetorical sensitives made more creative use of guilt, often employing it as the strategy that overcame the resistance, while noble self use of guilt tended to be more heavy-handed. Moreover, rhetorical sensitives were the only group to use allurement and then only in the boss-secretary (nonintimate/one-up) situation. The following two dialogues from the boss-secretary situation indicate the differences between rhetorical sensitives and noble selves in the use of guilt, as well as the rhetorical sensitive's use of allurement. As will become apparent in this dialogue and the ones that follow, we have preserved the authors' spelling and punctuation.

Rhetorical Sensitive:

X: O.k., well, I just thought that since you were an active part of the organization that you wouldn't mind duplicating these letters--since they are very important, and we've always done it this way.

Y: But, I have enough work to do already.

X: I know, so do I--listen, I'll try and get someone else to do it, today for me, but if I can't wouldn't you help me out this one time--it would be benefiting the organization as a whole.

Y: O.k., sounds like a good idea.

X: Good, I'll work out something so we can handle these problems in the future and, maybe you can give me input on how to do it. I really appreciate your help.

Noble Self:

X: I used to ask my previous secretary to do the copies and she did it out of the kindness of her heart.

Y: That's not in my job description. Nor am I a member of your organization. I will do what work that is necessary for the continuance of this business, but I don't feel I have to put myself out for something you can do yourself.

X: All right, I'll do it myself. You don't have to do it. But your refusal sure will make business seem cold around here.

Note how the rhetorical sensitive and the noble self both began the episode with guilt but used the strategy in slightly different manners. The rhetorical sensitive's guilt appeal reminded the secretary of a positive value for the relationship between the two, that of the other person being an "active part of the organization." Basing the guilt on this factor allowed the rhetorical sensitive to use the allurement strategy ("it would be benefiting the organization as a whole") as a natural consequent of the reason for the initial request. By contrast, the noble self's use of guilt took as its theme the role

distinction between the two ("I used to ask my previous secretary...") and the noble self's expectation for the secretary's behavior ("she did it out of the kindness of her heart"). When the secretary refused, the noble self again resorted to guilt, this time as a threat of what would happen if the secretary's behavior did not conform to expectations ("your refusal sure will make business seem cold around here").

Altruism. Results from the second function indicated that rhetorical reflectors were distinguished from noble selves and rhetorical sensitives in their use of altruism. As a strategy, altruism was used most frequently in the shift switch (nonintimate/symmetrical) situation. Below are three representative dialogues from that situation:

Rhetorical Reflector:

X: Would you please work for me on Saturday? If you will I'll take your place for you next time if you need someone?

Y: "Well," its not that, Jeff, the cute one is working Tuesday and I'm not sure I want to give up my Tuesday.

X: O.k. Well I don't really care if I lose a day. Would you mind work both days?

Y: I guess not. I haven't made plans yet.

X: Well if you don't mind I'd appreciate the help. The date means alot to me.

Y: Sure, go on. I'll work for you.

X: Great. Thanks! Call me first if you ever need to swap. Again thanks alot.

Noble Self:

X: I was wondering; would you mind switching shifts with me? Taking my Saturday night for your Tuesday night?

Y: Well I don't know . . .

X: If you have plans I'll understand--But you see--I've got this date that's really important to me and I need to know now!

Y: Well I don't know . . .You know how good Tuesday nights are, well with the amateur show and happy hour--I just don't know.

X: Yeah--but come on--Saturdays are the best nights in this joint--everybody wants to work Saturdays . . . You know how much I make in tips on a Saturday Night? Do you really think I'd be giving it up if this date wasn't important to me, huh?

Y: Well O.k.--since I'm free why not.

X: Thanks a-lot--I really appreciate it--and I owe you one--

Y: O.k.--have a good time.

X: Thanks again.

Rhetorical Sensitive:

X: I could really use your help. I know we don't know each other to well, but I'd like to ask you a big favor?

Y: Oh yea, what?

X: I have a really important date with a beautiful, great girl tonight and . . .

Y: You want me to take your shift, right.

X: Well, aaaa . . ., that would be great; could you?

Y: Well, I guess I didn't have much planned for tonight anyway.

X: Yea, then if you have an important date in the future I could possibly work for you.

Y: Yea, that's a good idea. Sure I'll work your shift.

X: Thank you very much!

Y: Sure, your welcome.

X: Bye.

Y: Bye.

The major difference between the RR dialogue and the other two is that the rhetorical reflector introduced the altruism

strategy at the end, after Y had agreed to the shift change. From the way it was phrased, it seemed that the rhetorical reflector was embarrassed to use altruism but introduced it as a way of reinforcing Y's decision, as if Y wouldn't have complied unless the request was an important one. By contrast, the noble self and the rhetorical sensitive both introduced the altruism strategy right away, as the principal justification for the request, and the noble self in particular used altruism as a means of indicating urgency and pressuring Y for a positive response. Note that the rhetorical sensitive's use of altruism is phrased in a more self-deprecating manner ("I have a really important date with a beautiful, great girl...") and that the rhetorical sensitive imagines Y interrupting and filling in the request so that X does not have to make it overtly.

Aversive Stimulation. The second discriminant function also indicated that there was a difference between RR and both RS and NS on the use of aversive stimulation. While this strategy was not used often, it was used by each of RS, NS, and RR in the boss-secretary (nonintimate/one-up) situation. Below are dialogues representing each's use of aversive stimulation in that situation:

Rhetorical Reflector:

X: Please do not think that I am trying to impose upon you, but my secretaries have always agreed to do this for me in the past, and I naturally thought that you, too . . .

Y: I am not interested in hearing what your former secretaries did. I do not make coffee, run errands or any of those "extra" jobs. I am beginning this position, just as I intend to end it, being assertive.

X: Well, I never.

Noble Self:

X: Yes, this is personal, however this is for a good cause. This organization help a lot of people in need and is very respected in our community.

Y: Well, I still think that it is personal business and I shouldn't have to do it.

X: That's fine, you don't have to, however, I hope you are as scrupulous with your company time as you expect me to be.

Rhetorical Sensitive:

X: So you refuse to do the task I have asked you to do?

Y: Yes. My work is the company work, not YOUR personal work.

X: Do you feel by doing this that it would lead to more personal work?

Y: Yes. I want to make it clear that I do the job I'm paid for. I refuse to turn into one of those secretaries doing "little favors" for their boss. I am an employee, not a pet.

X: You make it sound like I'd want you to clean my shoes or shop for my spouses birthday present. Just because you extend a little of your time to me doesn't mean I'm going to take advantage of you. I'll respect your time if you respect mine. I feel both employer and employee can interelate their time. What if you needed some of my time to help you out? Would you want me to help you?

Y: Of course, but . . .

X: Would you feel I would be wrong by not helping you?

Y: Yes I would . . . Here, I'll send out the notices.

In this episode the rhetorical reflector's use of aversive stimulation differs from the other two orientations in that it is reactive to negative events in the situation ("Well, I never"). Even though the noble self also used aversive stimulation at the end of the dialogue ("I hope you are as scrupulous with your company time as you expect me to be"), it seemed to be present as

a means of maintaining the boss' position power for future situations. The rhetorical sensitive also used aversive stimulation to put Y "on the spot," but the move came at the beginning of the dialogue ("So you refuse to do the task I have asked you to do?"). The rhetorical reflector's use of the strategy, by contrast, seems to be formed out of a feeling of helplessness, as if X struck out at Y because X could think of no other way of ending the encounter.

Elementary Linkage Analysis

To examine the second research question we used McQuitty's elementary linkage analysis. McQuitty's (1960) procedure calls for identifying the strongest correlation in a set of variables and making that relationship the centerpiece of a diagram. Other significantly correlated variables are then added to the diagram in terms of their fit with the central relationship.

Correlation matricies for patterns of use of the thirteen strategies were computed for each of rhetorical sensitives, noble selves and rhetorical reflectors. Linkage diagrams were then constructed as described above. To insure stability of results, an alpha level of .01 was set for inclusion of strategy pairs. The resulting diagrams appear in Figure 1.

Figure 1 about here

Examination of the three diagrams reveals considerable differences among them. For one, there is a substantial difference in the portion of total strategy use among RS, NS, and RR. For rhetorical sensitives, significant relationships among

the strategies represented eighty nine percent of all strategies used. For noble selves, the figure was sixty seven percent, and for rhetorical reflectors, it was fifty-three percent.

The pattern of relationships for each of the three orientations was also unique for each. The only relationship that held constant among the three was a negative one between promise and explanation, though a negative correlation between ingratiation and aversive stimulation was observed for both rhetorical sensitives and noble selves. Rhetorical sensitives displayed a more complex web of relationships than did the other two, though the lynchpin strategy for RS individuals was clearly promise. Noble selves showed a tight pattern of strategy interrelationship, with promise and ingratiation serving as the anchors of a kind of mirrored triangle pattern. Rhetorical reflectors showed only three significant relationships, and none of those could be linked to either of the other two. Clearly, then, the pattern of correlations among strategies differed for each of the three orientations.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the way in which persuasive strategies were used by persons who had been identified as holding rhetorical sensitive, noble self, and rhetorical reflector orientations toward communication. Results of a discriminant analysis indicated that the strategies of guilt and allurement distinguished rhetorical sensitives from noble selves and that altruism and aversive stimulation distinguished

rhetorical reflectors from noble selves and rhetorical sensitives. Elementary linkage analysis indicated that the pattern of relationships among strategies were markedly different for each of the three orientations. Taken as a whole, the results provide insight into how orientations toward communication influence the way in which persuasive situations are perceived and enacted. In the paragraphs that follow we will discuss how the data illumine each of the RS, NS and RR orientations.

Rhetorical sensitive. Previous research has characterized the rhetorically sensitive person as one who is concerned for relationships with others and who makes situationally adaptive choices. The results of this study square with those characterizations. These data portrayed the rhetorically sensitive person as one who makes proactive choices in approaching persuasive situations. As indicated by the linkage analysis, rhetorical sensitives saw a greater range of options for handling persuasive situations, and they were able to draw upon higher-order strategies, such as allurement, if more direct approaches were unsuccessful. This ability not only served to satisfy immediate goals but worked both to maintain face and to preserve the character of the relationship despite any temporal conflict that might occur. Linkage analysis indicated that rhetorical sensitivity might be related to cognitive complexity, but this speculation needs empirical validation.

Noble Self. The persuasive style of the noble self can be characterized as straightforward and direct. Where rhetorical

sensitives linked their use of guilt with a "higher good" that would result from compliance, the noble self tended to use the strategy of guilt as a means of maintaining power in the conversation. This use of guilt as "verbal threat" seemed to typify the noble self's basic persuasive tact, to gain power in the situation and to use that power to push for compliance. When this tact did not succeed, the NS sometimes beat a retreat but attempted to maintain power in the relationship for use in future interactions (e.g., "But your refusal sure will make business seem cold around here"). The linkage analysis supported the notion that noble selves construct one basic script and pursue it with a good deal of dramatic force. Direct frontal assaults that do not produce immediate results are followed by negotiations. There seems to be little flexibility in the noble self's repertoire of strategies.

Rhetorical Reflector. Rhetorical reflectors have been characterized as wanting to fulfill persuasive objectives through the satisfaction of the needs of the other person. Such a characterization could help explain the relative lack of coherent use of strategies employed by rhetorical reflectors in these dialogues. Examination of the two strategies that separated rhetorical reflectors from noble selves and rhetorical sensitives indicated that rhetorical reflectors used these strategies in a reactive fashion, either to reinforce a previously-made decision to comply or to lash out in frustration when compliance was not forthcoming. Rhetorical reflectors were also much more tentative in these persuasive situations, as evidenced by the number of

qualifier words that characterized their messages. It is possible that rhetorical reflectors are less comfortable in assuming the role of the persuader than are rhetorical sensitives and noble selves. The linkage analysis indicated the degree of confusion evident among rhetorical reflectors; other than the negative relationship between promise and explanation, which was also found in the patterns for noble selves and rhetorical sensitives, the other two relationships were between strategies that were not often used, suggesting that the correlations were based on strong ties between these strategies in only one or two dialogues. The rather self-evident negative relationship between ingratiation and aversive stimulation found in the other two patterns did not appear for rhetorical reflectors ($r = -.03$). Clearly, rhetorical reflectors did not exhibit great insight into handling persuasive communication situations.

As important as the study's findings, however, are the points left unresolved. While we found differences in the ways in which persons holding pure RS, NS and RR orientations toward communication dealt with persuasive situations, we studied a relatively small portion of our data set. Not included were those individuals who identified with more than one of the three orientations, and as a result we do not know to what extent those individuals resembled or were different from the ones we studied. Related to this problem is the difficulty with conceptualizing rhetorical sensitivity. Are there really three coherent communication ideologies which individuals either identify with or reject, or do people operate more on the basis of a set of

communicative maxims, some of which may conflict with each other? Perhaps people can identify with one of the orientations more than another, as opposed to following one orientation exclusively. Finally, we learned nothing in conducting this study about the nature of the rhetorical ambivalents, those individuals who identified simultaneously with NS and RR. Is this identification an artifact of measurement, or is there really a fourth "pure" group with a separate, albeit confused, communication ideology?

Despite failing to resolve these difficulties, what we accomplished with this study was substantial. We identified for the first time systematic behavioral differences in among persons holding RS, NS, and RR orientations. We found that these differences were cross-situational in nature. We also found that the differences were more subtle than what might have been suggested by simple analysis of quantitative differences in strategy use. In fact, we probably observed more about the behavior of our three groups from examining their exemplar dialogues than we did from studying the results of the statistical analyses. This finding suggests that communication researchers need to concentrate as much of their attention on the ways persuasive strategies are constructed and used as they have on identifying strategies that are most likely to be employed in a given situation. If nothing else, this study reaffirms that both what one says and how one says it are important, not just to communication praxis but to communication scholarship as well.

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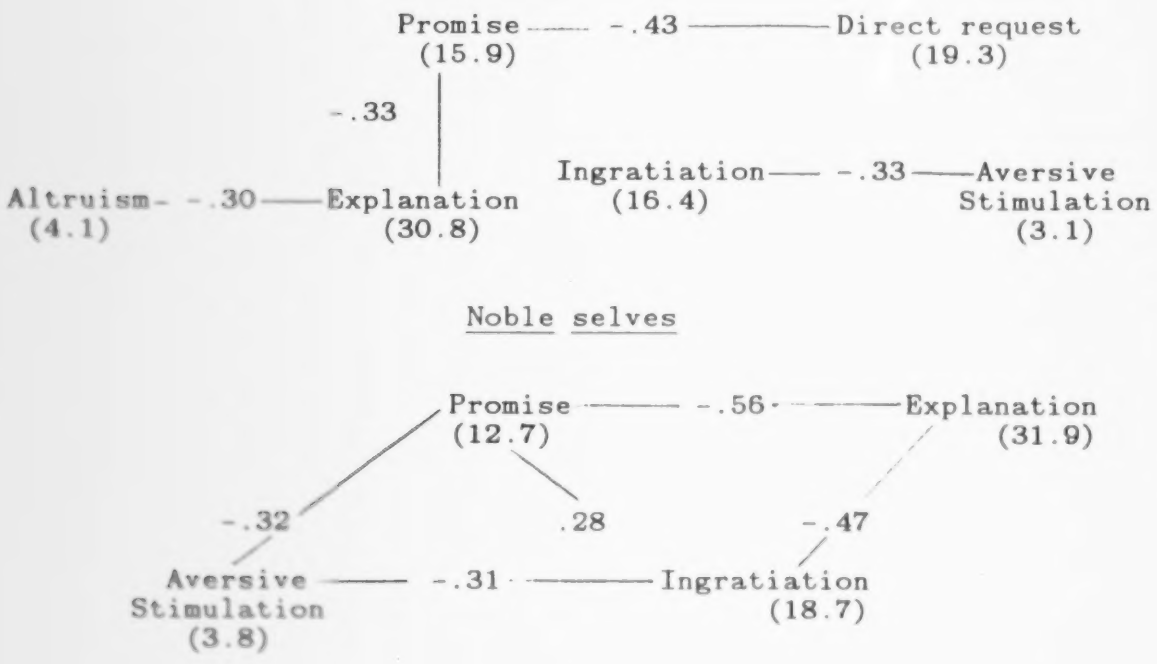
TABLE 1

Distances from Group Centroids

	Function 1	Function 2
Rhetorical sensitives	.45	.22
Noble selves	-.44	.20
Rhetorical reflectors	.01	-.42

FIGURE 1

Elementary Linkage Analyses



Numbers in parentheses indicate mean percentages of strategy usage.